Transcriptions by: Dr. Ángel O. Navarro Zayas angelnavarro2000@gmail.com
Ponce, Puerto Rico (November, 2023)

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office

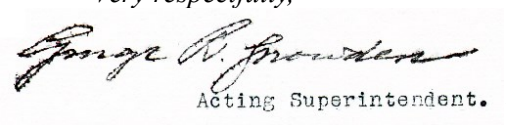
November 9, 1898.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

In answer to your letter of the 7th instant received this morning I beg to enclose the report of the Engraver in reply to your enquiry as to preparing a die for a coin similar in size and design to the peso of Porto Rico.

Very respectfully,



[1]

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Engraver's Department

November 9, 1898
Hon. Henry K. Boyer,
Superintendent U. S. Mint,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sir:

In answer to the inquiry of the Director of the Mint in letter of the 7th instant, namely: "How long it would take to prepare dies of the size and similar in design to the peso of Porto Rico," I beg to say I cannot say definitely the amount of time required without knowing the exact design, as while it might be similar as to weight and size, the character of the design might be very dissimilar, perhaps containing much more work and therefore occupying a greater length of time to produce the dies, and it might of course be just the reverse.

If I can learn what the design is to be, I can readily state the time required.

I should also know whether an experimental piece is all that is required or whether I would have to prepare for an amount of coinage – because in the first case a pair of dies only would be required, while in the latter – master dies and hubs would be necessary, all of which would take time.

If the Director will furnish a description of the design and also say whether an experimental piece or regular coinage is wanted I can much better answer his question, but to give him some idea of the time required, I would say it would take from three to six months to prepare for regular coinage.

[1] US National Archives (NARA), RG 104 entry 229 box 079.

I have examined the Peso coin and find that on the periphery there is the fleur-de-lis in raised form. Anything of this character would complicate matters very considerably and would have to be considered if required.

If a coin of this character is determined upon, all dispatch possible in the execution of the dies may be relied upon from this department

Very respectfully,
/s/ Charles E. Barber, Engraver.[2]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,

November 11, 1898.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In compliance with your request of yesterday the 10th instant I beg to enclose herewith a further report by the Engraver on the proposed coin for Puerto Rico.

Very respectfully,
George R. Snowden
Acting Superintendent[3]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,

November 11, 1898.

Hon. Henry K. Boyer,
Supt. U. S. Mint,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sir:

In reply to the letter of the Director of the Mint of the 10th instant, I beg to say: there has always been a very decided objection to placing the head or portrait of any man living or dead, upon our coins, and while there is no law forbidding it, the law does say what shall be placed upon our coins, as you will find by referring to Sec. 3517 Revised Statutes. I therefore am of the opinion that the head of Washington would not be considered as emblematic of Liberty. In regard to placing the fleur de lis upon the periphery of the coin I beg to call the attention of the Director to the fact that it is the emblem of the old Bourbon family, and would seem to have no place upon the coin of a free Republic, the United States of America. And again it would

[2] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 entry 229 box 079.*
[3] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 entry 229 box 079.*

complicate our coinage as it would necessitate a change to be made in our presses. I may say that we have never made coin with a raised figure upon the periphery. It is true that this department did devise a method for doing it, and some experiments were made that would seem to justify the opinion that it was a success, but it was never carried beyond an experiment.

I beg to state as a suggestion what seems to be the custom in other governments and their possessions in regard to coinage:

You will find that Spain places upon the coins of her colonies the regular emblems and devices of her own coins, with this slight change, the obverse of the Un Peso coin of Port Rico is the same as the five pesetas piece of Spain, the only change found is on the reverse, and that is only in the inscription, the coin of Port Rico having Isla de Puerto Rico One Peso = 5 P.tas.

With Great Britain we find the same state of affairs. The obverse is always the head of the reigning monarch and the reverse is made to designate in some slight manner the country for which the coin is intended, as for instance, Canada, the copper coin contains the head of Victoria, the reverse is a wreath of maple leaves, and instead of calling the coin half penny, it is named cent to conform to the coin of the United States.

I, therefore, beg to say that if we should follow this custom of other countries as would appear to me the proper thing to do, and use the emblems and devices upon our dollar with the change only in the inscription and value thus, one dollar = Un Peso. I could of course soon be in a position to furnish dies for regular coinage, but if an entirely new coin is to be made I am sorry to say it will take time and resources of the country would not avail much, a steel does not yield to pressure of any kind, in fact it often proves quite the contrary and proves the old adage, "the more haste the less speed," and further, and hurried and make shift coin will only prove an annoyance and source of continual vexation, as it will bring down upon us the criticism and derision of the world, and no excuse that the dies were hurried out would avail us anything, as the question would simply be asked why did you not take proper time like other countries.

France two years ago commission three of her leading artists to prepare designs for her coins as she contemplated a change, and give them a year to do it in, the one taking gold, the other silver, and the third bronze.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to remind the Director that Congress will have to authorize this coin before anything beyond the experimental stage can be done.

Very respectfully,
Charles E. Barber Engraver.[4]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF THE MINT
Washington, April 27, 1900

H. Rice, Esq.

[4] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 entry 229 box 079.*

2519 State Street,
Chicago, Ills.

In reply to your letter of the 23rd instant, you are respectfully informed that such coins of Porto Rico as are redeemed by the Government will all be melted.

Your only chance of obtaining these coins would be through a coin dealer, or bullion broker.

Respectfully,

Geo E Roberts

Director of the Mint.

[5]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary,
Washington, D.C., May 3, 1900.

The Director of the Mint.

Sir:

This office has received notice by cable from Messrs. Watson and Sample, Special Agents, of the shipment from Puerto Rico of the sum of 833,333 pesos, equivalent to $499,999.80 U.S. money, by the U.S. Transport McPherson to New York City and thence by the United States Express Company to the United States at Philadelphia for recoinage.

These coins have been exchanged for U.S. money at the established rate of sixty cents in the coins of the United States for one peso of Porto Rican coin, as provided by the Act of April 12, 1900. Under instructions from the Department they were received by the agents in original packages with the understanding that they were subject to verification of count at the U.S. Mint, any shortages to be made good by the parties from whom they were received. You will, therefore, instruct the Superintendent to cause a careful and accurate count by tale to be made and report to the Department the result promptly. Should there be any shortages found the tags or initials to the packages must be carefully preserved and forwarded with the report.

Respectfully,

L A Vanderlip

Assistant Secretary.

[6]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office

May 9, 1900.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D. C.

[5] US National Archives (NARA), *RG104 E-235 Vol 316.*
[6] US National Archives (NARA), *RG104 E-229 Box 113.*

Sir:

Replying to your letter of May 7th, with reference to shipment to Assistant Treasurer U.S. New York, for transportation to Porto Rico, as follows:

One cent bronze pieces,		$10,000
Five cent nickel	"	20,000
Dimes		20,000
Quarter dollars		50,000
Half dollars		50,000
	Total,	$150,000

I beg leave to say that this shipment is being gotten ready and will be finished today.

We are using new kegs, extra lined at the ends.

Referring also to your letter of May 8th, requesting me to inform you if the bags and kegs in which the first shipment of Porto Rican coin is to be made will be fit for further use, I beg leave to say the kegs should be returned and can be used again but not the bags. As instructed, I have informed the Assistant Treasurer at New York with reference to this matter.

Very respectfully,

Superintendent. [7]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., May10, 1900.

The Director of the Mint,

Sir:

This office has received notice by cable from Messrs. Watson and Sample, Special Agents, of the shipment to-day from Porto Rico of the sum of 500,000 pesos by the U.S. Transport Crook to New York City thence by the United States Express Company to the Mint at Philadelphia, for recoinage.

Please issue the necessary instructions to the Superintendent of the Mint similar to those sent him concerning a shipment by the McPherson received recently, of which you were advised in Department letter of the 3rd instant.

Respectfully,

[7] US National Archives (NARA), *RG104 E-229 Box 114, May 1900.*

Assistant Secretary.[8]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
May 24, 1900.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

In reply to your letter of the 23rd instant, notifying this office of the third shipment of Porto Rico coin and requesting information as to the progress in counting the first shipment, I beg to say that it is expected that the count of the first shipment of 833,333.30 pesos Porto Rico coin will be completed on Monday, 28th instant.

The counters have been delayed by the condition in which some of the coin was received, viz: - All denominations being thrown together loosely in the boxes.

Very respectfully,

Acting Superintendent.[9]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
June 2, 1900.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I beg to request information as to what disposition shall be made of the Porto Rican silver coins redeemed under Act April 12, 1900, now in this Mint and to arrive.

As the Transfer Order for the last lot is at hand, I will thank you to instruct me at your earliest convenience.

Very respectfully,

Acting Superintendent.[10]

[8] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 114 May 1900.*
[9] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 115.*

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
June 8, 1900.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

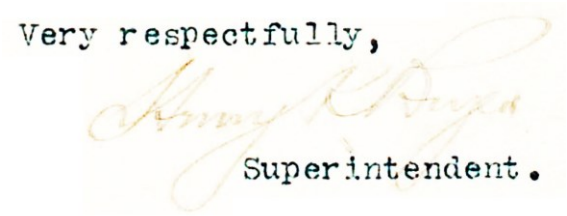
Sir:

With reference to the removal of new standard silver dollars to the vaults in the new mint, and your authorization of June 2nd, for the removal of 3,500,000 I beg leave to say that the exact number in the cashier's vault is $3,658,000.

Since your authorization of June 2nd, we have been ordered to box from this amount $200,000 for Porto Rico- which is being done to-day.

I, therefore, unless instructed to the contrary, will transfer an even 3,000,000 to the new mint.

Very respectfully,



Superintendent.

[11]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
June 30, 1900.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

In pursuance of your requests of dates June 20, 22, and 23, the undersigned entered upon the examination of the accounts of the several offices of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia, on Monday, June 25th inst., and having completed the examination, respectfully report:

We found in the hands of the Superintendent uncurrent coin and bullion as follows:

[10] US National Archives (NARA), *RG104 E-229 Box 115.*
[11] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 116.*

	Std. Ozs.
June deposits and redeposits, gold	97,076.710
New York Assay Office bars	1,619,211.736
Proof gold	56.699
Partings- June deposits of silver	392.404
Total	1,716,737.549

	Std. Ozs.
Silver bars under seal	73,724,139.90
June deposits and partings	22,613.38
Uncurrent coin	196,508.00
Total	73,943,261.28

We found cash in the hands of the Cashier, as follows

Gold coin	$ 36,922,090.00
Standard dollars, current	71,457,104.00
Standard dollars, uncurrent	1,786,850.00
Subsidiary silver coin	1,230,660.50
Proceeds of Porto Rico coin	799,991.97
Minor coins	229,800.00
Currency	228,001.59
Total in hands of Cashier -	$ 112,654,498.06

The Coiner's balance as per ledger, was:

	Std. Ozs.
Gold	187,585.540
We found on weighing	187,268.754
Showing a loss of	316.786

	Std. Ozs.
Coiner's silver balance as per ledger	808,648.07
We found on weighing	800,014.90
Showing a loss of	8,633.17

	Std. Ozs.
Coiner's nickel balance, as per ledger	342,251.58
We found on weighing	342,352.43
Showing an excess of	100.85

	Std. Ozs.
Coiner's bronze balance, as per ledger	496,738.17
We found on weighing	496,738.26
Showing an excess of	0.09

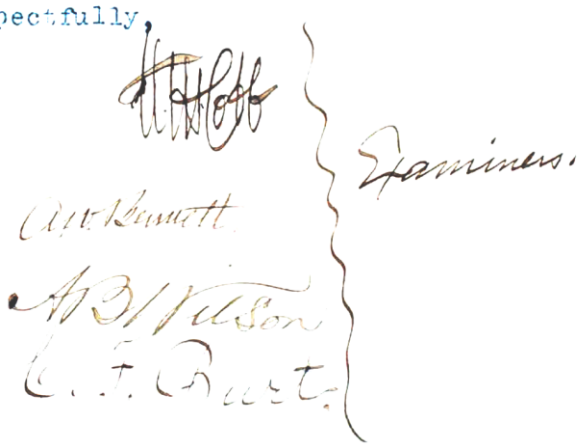
	Std. Ozs.
The Melter and Refiner's gold balance as per ledger, is	1,990,169.041
We found of weighing	1,988,392.906
Showing a loss of	1,776.135

	Std. Ozs.
The Melter and Refiner's silver balance as per ledger, is	759,748.58
We found on weighing	771,548.69
Showing an excess of	11,800.11

Relative to the improvement of conditions for the annual settlement – we beg to say that it would simplify matters greatly were the practice of sending large shipments of bullion from the Assay Offices to this Mint in the midst of the settlement abandoned. If such shipments could be made a week earlier, so as to reach this mint before the settlement begins, there would be no suspension of the work of the examiners, and no confusion. Every avoidable interruption of a transaction so important should be avoided.

The Superintendent and the Operative Officers have afforded us every facility contributing to the speedy and correct verification of the assets. Mr. Cobb, designated to conduct the settlement, desires to say that he has never been more ably and intelligently assisted in the work, and in fact he is free to say the credit of the settlement should be given to them rather than to himself.

Respectfully,



[12]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
July 23, 1900.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I am in receipt of a letter from Messrs. Watson and Sample, Special Agents U.S. Treasury Department, San Juan, Porto Rico, requesting that in cases of "overs" or "shorts" in remittances of Porto Rican coins that the tags of the bags be forwarded to them.

We have heretofore forwarded the tags with our report of the count to you. If it is desired that here after we forward the tags to the Special Agents I beg that you will so instruct me.

Respectfully,

[13]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
August 30, 1900.

[12] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 117 June 1900.*
[13] US National Archives (NARA, *RG 104 E-229 Box 119.*

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Referring to your letter of August 25th, informing me of a shipment of 607,000 pesos from Porto Rico on the 20th instant, I have that the amount received from the U.S. Express Company on the 28th instant consisted of 214 kegs. The value given by the way-bill 607,906.66 pesos.

I thus inform you as we have received no letter from the Special Treasury Agents- as in former cases, advising us of the number of kegs and contents.

Respectfully,

[14]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent Office,

August 1900.

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Monthly report of metal returned by Coiner to Melter and Refiner, filings returned from Adjusting room, &c.

[14] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 122.*

Metal.

	Std. Ozs.
Gold	15,438.10
Silver	751,064.50
Filings returned from Adjusting Room	
Gold	47.50
Silver	221.30
Number of men employed in rolling room	49
Number of men employed in coining room	9
Number of men employed in refinery	8
Number of men employed in making ingots	26
Number of men employed in granulating bullion and melting refined bullion	4
Number of men employed in deposit melting room	3
Number of men employed in sweep cellar	3
Detailed from making ingots to handling Porto Rico coin	2

[15]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
September 4, 1900.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.
Sir:

Herewith I enclose report of the operations &c. during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1900.

Under the head of "New Machinery, Methods, &c:" I beg to call your attention to the reference to the returns from the electrolytic plant for the month of August of the present fiscal year, which you may prefer to refer to by way of foot note.

Respectfully,

[15] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 122.*

Respectfully,

Superintendent.

Minor coins to the amount of $2,147,487.21 have been distributed throughout the states and territories of the United States during the fiscal year 1900; $1,427,969.60 in nickel five cent pieces, and $719,517.61 in bronze one cent pieces, this amount includes $30,000 sent to the Island of Porto Rico, and $1,500 to the Phillipine Islands The expenditure for the distribution of minor coin for the same period was $44,796.90.[16]

Mint of the U.S. at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
September 6, 1900

Henry K. Boyer,
Superintendent,

SUBJECT:
Rel to express charges on shipment of coin from Porto Rica &c.

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
September 6, 1900.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

In reply to your letter of the 4th instant referring to my letter of the 30th ultimo in reference to shipment from Porto Rico of 607,906.66 pesos (referred to in your letter of September 4th as 30,000 pesos) I beg leave to say that no invoice of the same has been received at this mint and I therefore have to request that a copy of the invoice retained by the Special Treasury Agents be forwarded.

I also have to say that I have received a letter of August 25 from De Ford & Co, San Juan, Porto Rico, advising me they have shipped by the transport "McClellan" fifty one kegs (51) containing one hundred seventy nine thousand four hundred fifty pesos and forty centavos (179,450.40)

Silver	*176,357.85*
Copper	*3,092.55*
	179,450.40

[16] US National Archives (NARA), RG 104 E-229 Box 122; [excerpt] page 9.

Also a letter from the same firm dated August 29th, advising me they have shipped by the S.S. "Caracas" three kegs of Porto Rican coin containing nine thousand two hundred and six (9,206) pesos and fifty five (55) centavos.

Silver	*8,974.50*
Copper	*232.05*
Total	*9,206.55*

These letters were accompanied by detailed invoices. The three kegs mentioned in letter of August 29th have been received. The expressage has not been paid and is demanded of us- $12.05. Kindly advise me whether I shall make payment. The fifty one kegs have not been received.

Respectfully,

Superintendent.

[17]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
September 10, 1900.

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Referring to my letter of the 30th ultimo in reference to shipment of 606,906.67 pesos from Porto Rico, stating that I had received no letter or detailed invoice from the Special Treasury Agents and your reply thereto dated September 4th- I beg leave to say that on the 8th instant I received a letter from the Special Agents accompanied by a copy of the invoice and that today I received the original letter of advice accompanied by the original invoice, both dated August 20th.

Respectfully,

Superintendent.

[18]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia
Superintendent's Office,
September 10, 1900.

[17] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 122.*
[18] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 123 Sep 1900.*

Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.
Sir:

Referring to my letter of the 30th ultimo in reference to shipment of 606,906.67 pesos from Porto Rico, stating that I had received no letter or detailed invoice from the Special Treasury Agents and your reply thereto dated September 4th – I beg leave to say that on the 8th instant I received from the Special Agents accompanied by a copy of the invoice and that today I received the original letter of advice accompanied by the original invoice, both dated August 20th.

Respectfully,

Superintendent.

[19]

The Mint of the United States at Philadelphia,
Superintendent's Office,
September 18, 1900.

Enclosure.

The Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Herewith I enclose account for transfer of pesos during September 1900 of $150.70, referred to me by you September 15th and received September 17th. Owing to errors in the account I beg to return it for correction. On the face of it the account is inaccurate; it is dated September 18th and was received here on September17th.

The value of the copper, $477.02, based upon the amount stated therein is incorrect in calculation and should be $4,770.24. But these figures are all incorrect; this shipment was one of 51 kegs of Porto Rican coin containing 176,357.65 pesos in silver and 3,092.55 in copper, total 179,450.40, by DeFord & Co. Fiscal Agents at San Juan, Porto Rico, of which I was notified by their letter of August 25th, which letter specified the amount as I have just stated. This letter was accompanied by an invoice in detail, the total silver and copper conforming with the amount stated in their letter and being as I have just stated. This coin was received September 10th. and is not yet counted. The account therefore should stand as follows:

[19] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 123.*

	Amount	Charges
Value	105,814.71	
Silver	176,357.85	$105.81
Value	1,855.53	
Copper	3,092.55	18.55
		$124.36

Respectfully,
Superintendent.

[20]

U.S. Mint Service - Form No. 44.								No. 39717	
Mint U.S. at Philadelphia.								Shipment to 4.	
Memorandum of Porto Rico Coin	deposited on September 22, 1900 from Treasury U.S. Washington D.C.								
	Weight				Value of the Silver				
Description of Bullion	Before melting		After melting		Finess	Value		NET VALUE	
	Ounces	Dec.	Ounces	Dec.	100ths	Ounces	Cents	Dollars	cents
Porto Rico Coin	147.890	--	147.890	--	8357	784.174	68	784.174	68
	901.358	--	901.358	--	900				
1.306.957.80 Pesos	at 60 Cents								
Equivalent to $784.174.68 US Money									

[21]

[20] US National Archives (NARA), *RG 104 E-229 Box 123 Sept 1900.*
[21] US National Archives (NARA), *RG104 E-229 Box 123*